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ABSTRACT

The major activities of the Research Coordinating Unit during this period included: (1) identifying issues and priorities of vocational education problems needing research, (2) establishing liaison with state agencies and others interested in vocational education, (3) working with institutions of higher education in initiating and conducting research related to vocational education, (4) consulting with local school districts in planning and implementing vocational-technical programs, (5) gathering, analyzing, synthesizing, and reporting relevant research findings, and (6) establishing an educational research retrieval and dissemination center. (CH)

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FINAL REPORT

Contract No. OEG-4-7-063009-1613 (085)

Research Coordinating Unit

Wayne Grames, Director
Research Coordinating Unit
Office of the State Superintendent
of Public Instruction
Helena, Montana 59601

September 30, 1969

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

Office of Education
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Introduction

During the first nineteen months of operation, the Research Coordinating Unit underwent three major stages of development. The first stage was organizational in nature. The unit was charged primarily with serving the Vocational Education Division of the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The sub-divisions of the Vocational Section are: Agriculture Education, Manpower Development and Training, Business and Distributive Education, Home Economics Education, Technical Education, Trade and Industrial Education (including Fireman Training), Vocational Guidance, and Work Study.

The second phase of operation was primarily concerned with establishing a professional relationship with personnel necessary to the development of a functioning and meaningful program of operation. This included persons from the following organizations: the Vocational Education Division of the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the public and private colleges and universities in the state, the private and public elementary and secondary schools in the state, teachers organizations, the Research and Analysis Unit of the Unemployment Compensation Commission, the Montana State Employment Service, the local divisions of the Office of Economic Opportunity throughout the state, and industries, businesses and labor unions.

The third phase was the actual conduct of those activities deemed necessary to the fulfillment of the program's objective. This third phase resulted in the present operational framework in which the Research Coordinating Unit has functioned during the last twenty-two months to meet the following objectives:

1. Identify issues and priorities of problems in vocational education needing research.

2. Establish liaison with state agencies and others interested in vocational education.

3. Work with institutions of higher education in initiating and conducting research related to vocational education.

4. Consult with local school districts in planning and implementing vocational-technical programs.

5. Gather, analyze, synthesize and report relevant research findings.

6. Establish an educational research retrieval and dissemination center.

7. Encourage research within the state in the vocational-technical areas.

8. Coordinate research being conducted intra and inter state.

9. Design and conduct evaluation of vocational-technical education efforts in the state.

Methods

The Research Coordinating Unit is directly responsible to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Liaison is maintained with the following divisions within the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction: Instructional Services, Vocational Education, and Services Development. The other departmental divisions are: General Services, Administrative Services, and Finance and Statistics.

A four-person staff was developed including the following: Research Coordinating Unit Director, Research Coordinator, Research Assistant, and Research Coordinating Unit secretary. This staff pattern has been revised and the present staff of the Research Coordinating Unit consists of Research Coordinating Unit Director, Research Coordinator, Research Assistant, Research Coordinating Unit secretary, and statistical clerk. Each of the staff members has responsibilities for effecting the major objectives of the unit.

The professional staff has worked directly with colleges and universities, local school districts and state and private organizations in developing research projects and statistical information directly relating to vocational education. The Research Coordinating Unit has also conducted inservice workshops and meetings to upgrade vocational educators and others interested in vocational education and vocational research within the state.

An Advisory Council of the Research Coordinating Unit was organized to help identify problem areas and establish priorities for occupational research.

The professional staff has served as consultants on several interagency planning and research committees within the state and outside of the state. The professional staff has attended several national, regional and state meetings pertaining to education and research.

The unit has sponsored inservice workshops, seminars and meetings in an effort to effect the major objectives.

Results and Findings

This portion of the final report includes the major accomplishments of the unit relating to the major objectives stated previously in this report.

1. Identify issues and priorities of problems in vocational education needing research.

   Although much of the ground work for this objective was determined during the first nineteen months of operation, the identification of issues and priorities continued throughout the grant period. The priorities assigned to problems have been maintained through the following means: Constant communications with labor organizations within the state, cooperating in the organization and conduct of seminars for vocational-

technical oriented personnel within the state, making available to interested groups and individuals out-of-state consultants knowledgeable in the "world of work", disseminating up-to-date statistics obtained from the U.S. Labor Department and the Montana Unemployment Compensation Commission, and maintaining constant liaison between the Research Coordinating Unit and the Vocational Education Division of the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. From this priority list the Research Coordinating Unit has developed or assisted in developing several projects which have provided pertinent information of occupational needs within the state.

2. Establish liaison with state agencies and others interested in vocational education.

Consultive services have been provided by the Research Coordinating Unit staff to the members of the university system within the realm of project development. A close working agreement between the Research Coordinating Unit and the local Employment Service offices in many of the Montana communities has been developed. This has proven very valuable in conducting occupational surveys within these communities, thus enabling us to obtain and develop formats and types of information needed for planning vocational education programs. The Unemployment Compensation Commission readily provides us with labor market statistics, projected employment figures, demand occupation figures and projections, which prove valuable in vocational education planning.

State and local organizations of the health profession provided back up information, advisory and consultive services and support to the Paramedical Survey which the Research Coordinating Unit conducted during this funding period.

The project "Designing Education for the Future" and the Research Coordinating Unit cooperated in presenting several "Communication Media Workshops" throughout the state. Through this workshop a large population was introduced to the various new developments in communications media and their application in the educational field.

The Research Coordinating Unit has provided advisory and consultive services to other state and private agencies in developing and obtaining funding for projects affecting vocational education.

3. Work with institutions of higher education in initiating and conducting research related to vocational education.

Advisory and consultive services have been provided to all institutions of the university system and the private institutions of higher education within the state. Designing, writing and possible funding sources of research proposals have been the topics of several presentations by the Research Coordinating Unit staff to various graduate classes within our university system. Invitations

to discuss the growing ERIC system and the Montana Research Coordinating Unit dissemination center have also been accepted and presentations made to graduate classes within the system.

4. Consult with local school districts in planning and implementing vocational-technical programs.

One of the greatest emphasis of the Research Coordinating Unit during this funding period has been on local school districts. Acting as consultants to local school districts in the designing and conducting of community surveys has proven very beneficial. Through this type of survey, a basis for enlarging, revamping and updating vocational-technical offerings of the local districts has been procured. By organizing this information on a statewide basis, a comprehensive picture of the present vocational education situation has been obtained and is presently being assessed. Information gleaned from local school districts has also been gathered and assimilated into forms for the state vocational education division. This is an on-going process as more local school districts are requesting services in conducting these surveys. In addition to this service, members of the staff have served as consultants to local school districts in designing and conducting research projects funded at the state level with 4 c monies.

5. Gather, analyze, synthesize and report relevant research findings.

All employment statistics for the State of Montana are received by the Research Coordinating Unit for analyzing and synthesizing into useable information for local school districts. Pertinent information is reported throughout the state to local school districts and is available upon request to other interested persons. This information is reported to the Vocational Education supervisors within the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. A working liaison has been established between the labor and professional organizations within the state for exchange of pertinent information on employment needs in Montana. Data pertinent to Montana obtained in the surveys and projects conducted by the Research Coordinating Unit or organizations or persons are analyzed and synthesized into forms which can be utilized by local school districts.

6. Establish an educational research retrival and dissemination center.

The reorganization of the Research Coordinating Unit's Information Dissemination Center has been undertaken during this funding period. After the attendance by the Research Assistant to the National Invitational Research Dissemination Workshop in October 1967, a revamping of the Information Dissemination Center was begun. This reorganization made the center more compatable with the Vocational Technical ERIC Center at Columbus, Ohio. This reorganization has continued during this funding period and will be a continuous process.

A reader-printer has been added to the equipment of the Dissemination Center. New shelving and file cabinets were also obtained, enhancing the storage capabilities of the center. The complete set of microfiche on the Disadvantaged series is on file as well as a complete series of fiche from the publication AIM and the New York State Curriculum, plus approximately 1,000 fiche which have been ordered from the ERIC Documentation Reproduction Series.

Summary

The Research Coordinating Unit of the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction was established in August 1965, under a contract authorized by the Commissioner of Education of the U.S. Office of Education. Continuation of the unit after the expiration of the original support allocation from the Vocational Education Act of 1963 was provided by a second contract from the Bureau of Research for a nineteen month period to terminate on September 30, 1968. This contract was extended to August 31, 1969.

The general objectives of the unit were stimulation, coordination, and dissemination of research in vocational and technical education in the state. This prototype research unit was to form the nucleus around which a permanent research program with the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction could be developed.

At the time that the Research Coordinating Unit was initially funded, local school districts were just beginning to receive monies from the Vocational Education Act of 1963. Vocational education was on the verge of its first real expansion in Montana in a number of years. The provision for a Research Coordinating Unit was both timely and necessary. Through the unit, means were provided to coordinate the efforts of educators to develop vocational-technical education courses that would be compatible with the needs of Montana industry for trained workers and with the interests and desires of Montana youths who were not college bound and, therefore, in need of a marketable labor skill.